

**FAIRFAX COUNTY ATHLETIC COUNCIL
MINUTES**

April 20, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Champness, Dranesville District
Harold Leff, Hunter Mill District
Lula Bauer, Lee District
Barbara R. Lowrey, Mason District
Stephen McLaughlin, Providence District
David Lacey, Sully District
Elizabeth T. Bradsher, Member-At-Large
Jeffrey E. Stein, Town of Clifton
Sam Althoff, Town of Vienna
Rob Hahne, Fairfax County Baseball Council
Carl Coan, Fairfax County Adult Softball Council
Mark Meana, Fairfax County Football Board of Commissioners
Rocky Styer, Alternate, Fairfax County Football Board of Commissioners
Jacqueline Stephens, Fairfax County Women's Sports Programs

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES:

George Lovelace, Fairfax County Park Authority
Ed Batten, Fairfax County Park Authority
Brian Daly, Fairfax County Park Authority
Timothy White, Fairfax County Park Authority
Paul Jansen, Fairfax County School Board
Patricia Franckewitz, Department of Community and Recreation Services
Chris Leonard, Department of Community and Recreation Services
Karen Avvisato, Department of Community and Recreation Services
Jesse Ellis, Department of Community and Recreation Services
Kristen Cigler, Department of Community and Recreation Services

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joseph E. Jozefczyk, Braddock District
Wesley M. Viilo, Jr., Mt. Vernon District
Roger Sims, Springfield District
J. Marcelo Gangotena, Diversity-At-Large
Jerry Carter, Town of Herndon
Robert L. Panek, Fairfax County Girls' Fast Pitch Softball
Tom Moore, Fairfax County Youth Basketball Council
Bill Harvey, Fairfax County Lacrosse Council
Deborah B. Honaker, Fairfax County Soccer Advisory Council
Tricia Johnson, Fairfax County Volleyball Council

GUESTS: Ralph Wills, Fairfax County Soccer Advisory Council

Meeting Opening – The meeting was called to order at 7:45 p.m. by Stephen McLaughlin. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

Citizens to Address Council – None

Presentations to Council –

Presentation #1: FCPS/County Memorandum of Understanding: Kristen Cigler, Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS)

Ms. Cigler presented the MOU between the county and schools (see attached). The MOU includes agreements about scheduling responsibilities, community use times, fee consistency, order of scheduling, data sharing, and staff roles. The MOU will be presented to the Board of Supervisors and School Board for final approval at their joint meeting on May 16.

In response to the claim that the MOU should help reduce the number of last-minute cancellations by schools, Dave Lacey asked if CRS was able to track cancellations by date and facility. Karen Avvisato answered that CRS has the ability to run those reports and analyze cancellations. Mr. Lacey asked if schools could post cancellation notices on-line similar to how the Park Authority posts weather cancellations, and Paul Jansen said that they could examine the possibility. Jeff Stein asked if FCPS would close their fields due to inclement weather. Ms. Franckewitz explained that the walk-on use committee is identifying ways to deal with those situations.

Rob Hahne mentioned that the school summer field closure deadlines should benefit user groups. Carl Coan asked how the notification deadlines for cancellations will be enforced. Mr. Jansen stated that the Deputy Superintendent, as the supervisor of the principals, would make final decisions on any cancellations made after the deadline. This is an improvement over the current state, as there is no enforcement of the deadlines from the school side.

Ms. Franckewitz stated that this presentation was for information only. Questions or concerns can be directed to CRS before May 16 and that the Council would receive the final MOU after approval. CRS, FCPS, and the FCPA will continue to examine fee consistency and will revisit tournament fees in the future.

Administrative Items –

On motion, the Council approved the minutes from the June 16, 2004, September 15, 2004, November 11, 2004, and March 16, 2005. With the minutes for the November meeting, the Council bylaws and standard operating procedures were handed out. Ms. Franckewitz explained that the bylaws will go to the Board of Supervisors for final approval, while the SOPs were approved by the Council and will go to the BOS for information only.

Chairman's Items

Mr. McLaughlin reminded the Council to be careful about sending letters or memos on Council letterhead. Anything on letterhead should be approved by the Council and copied to the Chairman. All correspondence from Council members should clearly indicate the capacity in which the authors are acting. Carl Coan stated that the Council's standard operating procedures state that only the Chair or his/her designee can use Council letterhead.

Committee Reports

Protecting Our Fields (Walk-on Use) Committee: Lula Bauer

Ms. Bauer presented the history and issues regarding walk-on use, as well as an overview of the proposals that the committee will be making to the Board of Supervisors (see attached), including recommendations about policy, enforcement, outreach, and field design. Mr. McLaughlin reiterated the need to involve the Park Authority in discussions about policy changes. Ms. Bauer said that, during committee meetings, she had gotten the impression that the FCPA was not willing to discuss policy changes, although that may not be the case any more. George Lovelace responded that Patricia Franckewitz and Brian Daly had briefed the Park Board and that the Board is willing to look at policy changes, but will not make any final decisions until the report is presented to the Park Board. Ralph Wills stated that the FCPA policy requiring a permit for more than 75 people needs to be changed to a lower number. Ed Batten of the Park Board restated that the Park Board will always examine and address issues that impact parks.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested changing terminology to emphasize the program as organized non-permitted play, not as a type of walk-on use, and much walk-on use (like families playing ball) is encouraged.

A discussion about the letter sent from Athletic Council members on the committee to the Board of Supervisors ensued, with a reiteration of the comments from the Chairman's Item earlier in the meeting. Tim White of the Park Authority responded that the FCPA Community Connections Initiative is not just about walk-on use, but increased park usage overall. The program is designed to increase enforcement in un-staffed parks and was submitted to the Board of Supervisors in September, before the Board Matter about walk-on use created the committee. Ms. Franckewitz echoed these comments, stating that walk-on use is not a new issue and that Mr. White and the FCPA has for a while talked about the need for additional enforcement staff and that the Council has always supported them.

Jeff Stein stated that the major difference between Prince William (whose walk-on problem is much smaller) and Fairfax County is that PWC has park police. Mr. Stein asked how the Council could assist the Park Board in pressing the Board of Supervisors for park police to enforce weekend and evening use of parks. Mr. White responded that there used to be park police, but that it was absorbed into the Fairfax County Police Department about 20 years ago. He also warned of using a "cafeteria approach," as

pieces of what works well in other jurisdictions are really parts of a larger system and approach. For example, PWC charges significantly higher fees than Fairfax County and charges extra for field maintenance (which must be performed by county staff).

Rob Hahne asked Mr. White what he suggested as possible solutions to the problem. Mr. White suggested that a lot of the field damage is also done by permitted users. What is needed is education and outreach for all users. The real key is enforcement and that a consolidated enforcement effort is needed and should be headed up by a single agency.

Mr. McLaughlin asked what the police perspective is. Ms. Franckewitz answered that a proposal for weekend and overtime enforcement is very expensive and must be used as a part of a broader, comprehensive approach.

Mr. Hahne asked about creating a volunteer enforcement program. Mr. White explained that the FCPA already has a Volunteer Field Monitor program, and Jesse Ellis stated that the committee recommended expanding the program. Mr. Stein stated that it is extremely difficult finding volunteers and that what is needed is the consistency and power of paid staff.

Liz Bradsher reminded the Council that the Council's diversity representative does not attend meetings, and that the Council does not do a good job of outreach.

Michael Champness stated that all policies examined do not need to be FCPA policies and suggested looking at parking and other "out-of-the-box" ideas. Barbara Lowrey asked if portable goals are a low-cost solution, as most of the problems are on fields with permanent goals. Mr. Champness also asked if this issue could motivate the county toward installing artificial turf (at least in goal mouths).

Harold Leff asked where the groups that get kicked off the fields will go. Mr. McLaughlin answered that the goal is to get them to apply for permits through CRS and that non-county residents will have to try to find fields elsewhere.

Mr. White asked if the walk-on users are the former "priority use groups." Mr. McLaughlin responded that allocations are now based on participant numbers, but that all groups are scheduled. Ms. Franckewitz stated that all space is allocated, but it is not all being used. Groups need to return the space they are not using. Mr. Wills responded that there is not enough space and that the allocation process should return to using priority groups. Ms. Bauer explained that the organized walk-on users do not want to go through the process of obtaining permits. Ms. Franckewitz explained that this was the case even before application fees were instituted.

Mr. Wills asked if the Council could move to support a park police force. Mr. White explained that the budget is too tight for that to be considered. Ms. Lowery suggested starting with volunteers. Ms. Bauer explained that the committee's proposal is for two CRS field monitors per district.

Mr. Batten stated that the economic impact of major soccer tournaments is astounding, but that the damage done to fields by overuse prevents Fairfax County from hosting many of these tournaments.

Mr. Coan asked what the next steps are. Mr. McLaughlin responded that Ms. Bauer's presentation outlined next steps, including working with the Park Board and presenting suggested strategies to the Board of Supervisors. He suggested that Council members contact their BOS representative to urge their support of the proposals.

Field Maintenance Committee: Rob Hahne

Mr. Hahne presented the field maintenance plan that was recently adopted by the Board of Supervisors (see attached). The plan, developed by CRS with assistance of FCAC, FCPS, FCPA, high school coaches, and other members of the athletic community, will consolidate maintenance programs under the Park Authority and standardize the routine work done on school fields.

Turf Fields: Pat Franckewitz, CRS

Ms. Franckewitz explained that the Board of Supervisors had enacted the Council's recommendation to redirect revenue from the application fee into three areas: custodial fees for winter use of gyms by primary season groups; field maintenance; and the development of rectangular fields, including artificial turf fields. Mr. McLaughlin asked how the geographic distribution of turf fields would be equitable, and Ms. Franckewitz responded that the process still needs to be determined.

Gym Policy: Pat Franckewitz, CRS

The new gym allocation policy went into effect this spring season.

Bylaws: Steve McLaughlin

The revised Council bylaws and standard operating procedures were handed out and discussed during administrative items. Notify Mr. McLaughlin if you have questions or comments.

Application Fee: Pat Franckewitz, CRS

This item was discussed earlier during turf fields' committee report.

Matters of Interest from Governing Bodies

Information – Fairfax County Park Authority: George Lovelace, FCPA

The dedication of Stratton Woods Park is this Saturday, April 23, at 9:30 am.

Information – Fairfax County School Board: Paul Jansen, FCPS – Nothing

Information – Community and Recreation Services: Patricia Franckewitz, Director, CRS

Ms. Franckewitz thanked the walk-on use committee and particularly Lula Bauer for their hard work and all the research they put into the project and stressed that educating people about the issue has helped a great deal. She also thanked Rob Hahne and the others on the maintenance plan committee for their hard work. She thanked Brian Daly for helping identify resources to help consolidate the maintenance strategies.

Old Business -

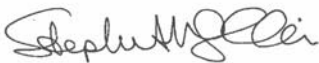
Carl Coan asked for clarification on the team size limits in the field allocation policy. Jesse Ellis explained that the policy does not limit the size of teams but states that the percentage of a team that is made of non-county residents is determined by dividing the actual number of non-county residents by the actual team size or the allocation factor specified in the policy, whichever is greater.

New Business -

Steve McLaughlin reminded the Council that elections will be held in May. Harold Leff volunteered to chair the nominating committee.

Adjournment – On motion, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephen McLaughlin".

Stephen McLaughlin
Chairman